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Instruction and Technology

Critical Thinking/Showing evidence

1. Explore the Intel Seeing Reason Tool. Click on the Overview and Benefits link. How does the tool facilitate students’ critical thinking?

This tool can be really helpful for students to see connections and analyze cause-and-effect relationships between different factors. For visual learners, the tool could be really helpful in seeing the different relationships rather than simply doing a report.

1. Click on Try the Tool and then click on the Demo and read the Project Description Road Safety. The map shows student’s ideas about causes of traffic jams. Create a new factor, describe its relationship to traffic jams, and add it to the map. Explain what you did.

The Factor I added was Bike traffic: as bike traffic increases, traffic jams decrease because people who usually drive may switch to bikes, causing fewer cars to be on the road. However, I also connected it to accidents: as bike traffic increases, accidents increase slightly because car and bike collisions increase.

1. Next click on the Tutorial (underneath Demo on the Try the Tool page) and view the animation. What are the key steps a teacher must take to set up the Seeing Reason Tool and engage students in using the tool?

* The teacher must log in and then clicks “Set up a new Seeing Reason project.”
* The teacher chooses a name, description, and question that students can see when they log in.
* The teacher clicks submit.
* Then the manage project teams page displays. The teacher goes to this page to set up the teams either manually or use the automatic settings.
* The teacher determines the number of teams, the team name, the password, and who is in the team.
* She then exits the Manage project teams workspace and is ready for the students to use the tool.
* In order to engage the students, the teacher can let them know they are doing an exciting team activities. The students will be engaged by the prospect of working together, having their own team and password, and determining relationships. It's important that the teacher provides a demo and a lot of instruction on how to use the tool.

1. Click on the Project Examples link and explore the Project Ideas and Unit Plans. How do the examples stimulate your thinking of how to use the Seeing Reason Tool?

I looked at the neighborhood diversity project which I thought was really interesting. Students are aware of poverty and racially segregated neighborhoods around them but are most likely completely unaware of the causes of this segregation. A tool like this could help them explore the causes. An idea I had would be to think about the cause of poverty and “underdevelopment” globally, why certain countries are poor and why others aren’t, for example students could compare how national GDP compares to birthrates death rates, type of government, availability of education, colonial legacy, etc.

1. Explore the Intel Showing Evidence Tool. Click on the Overview and Benefits link. How does the tool facilitate students’ critical thinking?

This tool makes students realize the importance of backing up claims with evidence; they may initially feel strongly about something but reconsider when they realize they are unable to back up their claim. It encourages students to use the higher order thinking skills of analysis and evaluation.

1. Click on Try the Tool and watch the Animated Overview to learn how to set up an account and copy project into the Teacher Workspace. Next click on the Secondary Demo and read the Project Description for Serious Malady Explain how each of the assessments provides guidance to students throughout the project.

According to the website, “assessments help students and teachers set goals; monitor student progress; provide feedback; assess thinking, processes, performances, and products; and reflect on learning throughout the learning cycle.” The science journal helps students keep track of the work they are doing and helps them synthesize their findings. The “Grand Jury Investigation” encourages students to get emotionally invested in the content, furthering the their desire to solve the mystery. The Multi Media presentation encourages students to creatively display their information.

7. What are the key steps a teacher must take to set up the Showing Evidence Tool and engage students in using the tool?

* Just like with the first tool, the teacher signs in, chooses a name, description, and question that students can see when they log in.
* After the teacher has set up the student work space, he/she can add evidence: either many pieces, or fewer depending on wether the teacher wants to have the students find evidence themselves (a more involved project) or not.
* The teacher comes up with an evidence quality rating and rationale for that rating for each piece of evidence. If the teacher wants the students to come up with their own rating, she should explain how to do it and provide an example.
* With evidence students have either gathered or examined, they can create a claim. They need to explain the claim and show which pieces of evidence support it and which pieces don't. They do this by linking the evidence to the claim.
* Each linked piece of evidence gets a rating for how much it supports or doesn’t support the claim. Combined with a strong quality rating, a piece of evidence could greatly support a claim.
* Based on the evidence linked to a given claim, students come up with a rating of the claim and their explanation for that rating.
* The students can analyze and synthesize this data to come up with an answer for the original question. The teacher is able to observe, make comments, support and guide the students' work as they go through the project.
* 8. Click on the Project Examples link and explore the Project Ideas and Unit Plans. How do the examples stimulate your thinking of how to use the Showing Evidence Tool?
* Students could do a project guided by the question “Should the U.S. Be involved in the Middle East?” Students could collect data supporting the argument such as: the evidence of political persecution and corrupt governments in Middle Eastern governments, civil rights violations, and the ideals of spreading democracy; and evidence against the claim such as: failed U.S. diplomatic efforts of the past, thousands of lives lost, financial cost to the U.S., and hidden motives such as desire for oil. They could synthesize their findings in order to justify or not the current interventions in Middle Eastern countries. For high schoolers, this would be a good way to explore current events and help them gain a better understanding of U.S. Diplomatic efforts, and whether or not they are a good idea/worth the cost.